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THE PHILOSOPHIC UNITY
OF MORE'S *UTOPIA*

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

1937

By

ROBERT P. ADAMS

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Although for centuries *Utopia* has been enjoyed as a brilliantly drawn picture of a happy state, it is striking that critics have rarely been able to agree on its significance as satire. Indeed, most aspects of More's *jeu d'esprit* are still controversial. The purpose of this essay is to discover a unified interpretation of *Utopia* in terms of the philosophic ideas underlying the satire as a whole, while a later essay will attempt to relate to the Utopian philosophy More's attack on war in particular.

To illustrate briefly the controversies centered on *Utopia*, consider for instance the fact that no fully satisfactory account of More's use of sources, as related to his central satiric aim, has yet been given. Between *Utopia* and the principal sources usually cited,—Plato's *Republic*, the *De civitate Dei* of St. Augustine, and the contemporary travel-narratives of Vespucci,—the similarities constituting supposed indebtedness are at least equalled by essential incongruities for which no coherent explanation has been offered. As far as a critical theory which might reconcile these oddities is concerned, the second book of *Utopia* especially seems to be a tissue of contradictions.

For example, it has long been assumed that More borrowed heavily from Plato's *Republic*;¹ yet on some vital points, particularly concerning war, there are, between the two states, many curious contradictions, which seem to stem from the fact that, while the *Republic* is designed as much for war as for peace, every normal activity in *Utopia* is peaceful. Thus Plato, considering hunting to be good training for war and war to be a school of virtue, made his professional soldiers one of the two highest ruling classes. The *Utopians*, on the contrary, reckon hunting to be an inhumane debauchery of man's "nature," while war itself they abhor as a school of unnatural cruelty. Accordingly they will have no professional soldier class whatsoever; indeed, they regard as worse than brutes the *Zapoletes*, who were soldiers by choice. In the *Republic*, on the

¹ The similarities and contrasts between the *Republic* and *Utopia* are well summarized, adequately for our present purpose, in *The Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton (Oxford, 1895), pp. li-liii. Comprehensive treatment of the sources of *Utopia* is yet to be made.

one hand, the ideal citizen is to be a soldier, while Plato's "healthy city" is very much an armed camp.² For Plato's soldiers poetry is forbidden, music is censored as demoralizing, and commerce is prohibited as degrading, while manual toil in general is done by a class of inferior men who are fit only to be slaves. Yet in Utopia, although all citizens undergo military training, nothing is more despised by all normal men than is war. Not only for the free citizens, but for women also, all virtuous learning is encouraged; most Utopians delight in music; those engaged in commerce which benefits the common welfare are honored; and not even the best citizens are considered to be degraded by any manual labor of public necessity. As for slavery, there is in Utopia no congenitally brutish class comprising all slaves: rather the Utopians uniformly impose bondage on all those who are not able to live "according to reason" or "nature"; yet if these bondmen regain their right reason, they may regain full citizenship, or may be received as citizens equal in privilege and honor with all others.

Turning to medieval writings which More is known to have drawn upon, it has been conjectured that the *De civitate Dei* of St. Augustine may have contained the germ of *Utopia*, since both writers conceived of a perfect social order in which all members were properly subordinated, each being glad of his work, and all enjoying community of goods.³ Concerning war, however, the two are poles apart. For while Augustine declared war to be a divinely-sent punishment, the Utopians viewed it as a man-made evil; while Augustine enlarged on the general weakness of man's powers, the Utopians glorified his reasoning capacity and his ability to modify his environment in the interests of the good life. Very singular indeed are the divergences concerning war. For throughout the Middle Ages the decisive authority who declared it "just" for virtuous Christians to use war, if necessary, to compel the assent of heretics, was Augustine.⁴ The Utopians, on the contrary, never

² Cf. A. O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1935), pp. 155-156.

³ Cf. the *De civitate Dei*, lib. xix, cap. 14; lib. xxii, cap. 30; *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. xlix-li; the discussion of parallels by A. W. Reed, "Sir Thomas More," *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Thinkers of the Renaissance and the Reformation*, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw (London, [1925]), pp. 123-138; R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (London, [1935]), p. 83.

⁴ Cf. C. L. Lange, *Histoire de l'internationalisme* (New York, 1919),

used force to coerce peaceful dissenters into agreement with a central authority.

May it perhaps be possible to show the basic features of Utopian life, including concepts of war, were derived with greater consistency from such travel-narratives as those of Amerigo Vespucci, which More knew? The two most important suggestions More took from Vespucci, thought Mr. J. H. Lupton, were that the New World savages were contemptuous of precious metals, and the observations that the people lived according to "nature," and might be called Epicureans rather than Stoics.⁵ In brief it may be said, however, that while in Vespucci's narratives More may have found scattered details which might in one way or another concern life "according to nature,"⁶ Vespucci represented no comprehensive parallels to the

pp. 47-90; F. Duval, *De la paix de Dieu à la paix de fer* ([Paris, 1923]), *passim*; especially the densely documented work of R. F. Wright, *Medieval Internationalism* (London, 1930), pp. 18-51, 109-116, 133-181; J. N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's 'City of God'* (London, 1921); C. H. McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York, 1932), p. 274 ff. and pp. 297-313; J. K. Ryan, *Modern War and Base Ethics* (Washington, D. C., 1933), pp. 5-24.

⁵ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 27, xxxviii. The four voyages "nowe in prynte" (1507) is taken to allude to the 1504 work, reprinted as *Amerigo Vespucci Letter to Piero Soderini*, trans. G. T. Northup (Princeton, N. J., 1916). The *Mundus novus* (1504), if More knew it, only corroborates the *Letter*, as far as war is concerned; cf. *Mundus novus* . . . trans. G. T. Northup (Princeton, N. J., 1916), pp. 4-9. More had no occasion to doubt the authenticity of these voyages; cf. s. v. "Vespucci," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.), XXVII.

⁶ Especially concerning war (from what will appear to be the Utopian viewpoint) the savages, in their rude life "according to nature" were apparently less depraved than some contemporary Europeans (cf. *Utopia*, Book I). While no men were found living in a perfectly pacific "life of nature," wars appeared to be fought simply and for motives having some color of "natural justice." Thus men fought to avenge murder, or, as cannibals, for needed food; but greed for land or rule caused no wars (cf. *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 38-39, 80-87). Modes of warfare were cruel, though weapons were crude; but no deliberately cruel, sophisticated "art" of war existed (A. Vespucci, *Letter to . . . Soderini*, trans. G. T. Northup [Princeton, N. J., 1916], pp. 6-7). A crude sort of "natural" justice prevailed: although no written laws existed, disputants were few (*Ibid.*). This "natural" agreeability was further reflected in that much property was held and used in common (*Ibid.*, p. 9). Perhaps also the savages' relative freedom from many major corruptions in European life, such as subjection to disease and the motive of greed, aided More in

Utopian social philosophy or concepts of war; indeed, the essential discrepancy between the life of the New World savages and that of the Utopians overweighs any debt for detail. For while both peoples were represented as living "according to nature," this resemblance turns out to be only verbal: since the savages lived and reasoned as culturally primitive barbarians, almost totally without conscious ethics, whereas in Utopia every free citizen lived consciously according to "reason" or "nature," as a virtuous philosopher whose life exemplified his philosophy. So far, indeed, no interpretation of *Utopia* has attempted seriously to explain, as closely bound up with a unified satiric purpose, both More's use of sources and the major features of Utopian life, including war.

No less puzzling a critical problem has been that of the alleged "inconsistencies" between certain curious Utopian practices and the personal actions of More himself. One typical form of criticism has been that which, dismissing the notion that the satire may have unity, asserts that in consequence of psychological conflicts within More's personality the *Utopia* is stuffed with contradictions, which it would be idle to attempt to reconcile, the picture of Utopia being at best only a "renaissance day-dream" in which lapses in unity probably represent More's characteristic "humor."⁷ Some scholarly editors have been so deeply perplexed by seeming political and religious "paradoxes" in Book II of *Utopia* as to conclude that, if More had a central satiric aim, it must remain lost in doubt.⁸ Even Mr. J. H. Lupton, who in most respects is the ablest editor of *Utopia*, admitted bafflement: to him it seemed only paradoxical that More should have represented the Utopians as un-"Chivalrous" in war, although in general they strictly fulfill all social obligations. Thus the Utopian naval strategy, of destroying enemy fleets by "translating" the shore beacons, appeared to him to be only an incomprehensible and "repellent feature of the Utopian character"; while equally unrelated to any unified satiric intention seemed

developing his Utopian idea that, to remain in civic health, a happy state must forcibly isolate its citizens from foreign social evils.

⁷ E. g., *The Utopia*, ed. H. Goitein (London, [1925]), pp. 3-4, 8-11, 18-20.

⁸ *Utopia*, ed. J. A. St. John (London, 1850), pp. lv-vi *passim*; *Utopia*, ed. J. C. Collins (Oxford, 1904), p. 125, l. 21. The latest editor of *Utopia*, P. E. Hallett (London, [1937]), p. 142, finds it "strange" that the Utopians draw arguments from hedonism to support their "grave" religion, in which virtue is defined Stoically.

to be the Utopian endeavour to abbreviate wars by purchasing the assassination of enemy leaders.⁹ Many are the seeming "inconsistencies" between Utopian practices and More's personal life which have lacked any unified explanation.

Recently, however, Professor R. W. Chambers in particular has presented a wealth of evidence to show that, as far as More's own life is concerned, *Utopia* is highly consistent with More's avowed ideas. Not undertaking a complete analysis of the satire, Mr. Chambers was content, when he had shown the fine integrity of More's character, to remind modern readers again that More was representing, not defending Utopian practices. He did, however, repeat an invaluable critical suggestion, that in the second book of *Utopia* More showed how he thought "enlightened and righteous heathen, . . . heathen philosophers, and, as such, guided solely by the light of reason," ought to behave.¹⁰ An important qualification of this statement must yet be made: the Utopians are guided not merely by "reason" but, most essential of all, strictly by *uncorrupted* "reason" or "nature,"¹¹ which in Utopia is forcibly kept from

⁹ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. xlvii; cf. p. 117, note; and see also *ibid.*, p. xli, on the opposite critical conclusions as to the real purport of the satire, as seen by various observers.

¹⁰ *Thomas More* (London, 1935), pp. 226-227. From time to time more or less tentative similar suggestions have been made but without systematic analysis of *Utopia*: e.g. *Utopia*, ed. J. A. St. John (London, 1850), p. 120; *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. 190; A. Rüegg, "Des Erasmus *Lob der Torheit* und Thomas More's *Utopie*," *Gedenkschrift zum 400. Todestage des Erasmus* (Basel, 1936), pp. 80-82; *Utopia*, ed. P. E. Hallett (London [1937]), p. 177; R. O'Sullivan, "Social Theories of St. Thomas More," *Dublin Review*, CXCIX (1936), 49.

¹¹ "Nature" as More uses the term cannot be defined simply. More uses "nature," "natural," "according to nature," and their equivalents, in two broad ways: (i) as applying to the "divine nature," and to its supposed attributes, modes of working, intentions, &c.; and (ii) to the essential "nature" of man, usually meaning "uncorrupted" man. Quite frequently indeed the term is found used to refer at once to "meanings" appearing in both classes (i) and (ii). In the notes I have attempted, not without considerable trepidation and without the slightest intention to be dogmatic, to indicate for each important use of these terms at least the principal "meanings" which are suggested by an intense study of contexts and parallel passages treating comparable subject matter. Quite invaluable has been the work of A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1935), especially pp. 447-456 ("Some Meanings of 'Nature'"); and A. O. Lovejoy, "'Nature'

all possible corruptions to which men are liable. Beginning with this point of departure, it may be possible to reconcile the controversial elements of *Utopia*, in consequence to offer a coherent solution of the problem of sources, and finally to reveal a central, highly unified purpose in the famous satire. If this reasoning is just, the notion that Book II of *Utopia* is an illogical, whimsical "renaissance day-dream," artistically inferior to Book I, may be discarded; while the satiric picture of Utopian life itself should appear as a satire, not notable so much for humorous paradoxes, as for the genius of the design and brilliance of its execution into a classic of English romance.

More designed Book I, which he wrote last, as a crafty introduction to the picture of Utopian life itself. Mainly it comprises two realistic dialogues on sore contemporary social problems: first, on the causes of corrupt government and on the duty of princes to rule justly;¹² and, second, on justice, the causes of vagabondage and crime, with the social roots of crime.¹³ While the evils attending war are discussed, attention is mainly focussed on the economic and administrative maladies of the whole state. Finally, the first book concludes with Hythlodaye's tantalizing assertion that all the social evils, together with others not yet mentioned, could be eliminated, if property were held in common; moreover, he promised to prove as much in his account of Utopia, which he had seen while in the New World with Amerigo Vespucci.¹⁴ But with Book II More slyly inducts his readers from the European scene into an ingeniously imagined state, whose resemblances to Christian Europe are quite deceiving. Only gradually does it appear that the startling differences between Europe and Utopia exist because in Utopia every free citizen is a philosopher whose life perfectly exemplifies his conceptions that, for uncorrupted men, the good life can be only that led strictly "according to nature" or "reason," even if the aid of divine revelation be lacking. In fact, so different is Utopia from Europe that the average European would be only a bondman (or slave) in Utopia, while most European princes would be executed in Utopia for the same reasons as those given for killing

as Aesthetic Norm," *Modern Language Notes*, XLII (1927), 444-450. For convenience I have cited definitions as numbered in these references, adding such qualifications as seem necessary.

¹² *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 87, 92-93, 97.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50 *passim*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-70, 104-114, *passim*.

dangerous wild beasts. Even the good Hythlodaye, himself a philosopher, was obliged to pass through a period of probation before he could be accepted as equal to the citizens, even the humblest. To make clear the unified ideas which govern these and other vital Utopian attitudes and practices, we must analyze the Utopian religious and social philosophy.

The ruling ideas in this philosophy can best be shown by analysis of the essential concepts, concerning "nature" or "reason," from which all important aspects of Utopian life appear to have been developed. Now the sole authority in religion, all citizens agree, is a universal power or "god," which is taken to be apparent to man in the various aspects of the One "nature":

in this pointe they agree all togethers with the wisest sort, in beleuyng that there is one chiefe and pryncipall God, the maker and ruler of the hole worlde; . . . But in this they disagre, that amonge some he is counted one, and amonge some an other. For euery one of them, whatsoever that is whiche he taketh for the chiefe God, thynketh it to be the very same nature¹⁵ (*eandem illam prorsus esse naturam*), to whose onely deuyne myght and maiestie the som and soueraintie of al thinges, by the consent of all people (*omnium consensu* [sic] *gentium*) is attributed and geuen.¹⁶

All citizens likewise agree that this divine universal power is One, that it is alone entitled to religious veneration; and while men cannot know "god" precisely by their unaided reason, god is evident to man in the orderly universe as everlasting creative power united with and tending to create virtue:

But the moste and wysest parte (reiectyng all thies [i.e. rejecting worship of sun, moon, or some virtuous man]) beleue that there is a certayne Godlie powre unknowen, euerlastyng, incomprehensible, inexplicable, farre aboute the capacitie and retche of mans witte, dispersed through out all the worlde, not in bygnes, but in vertue and powre (*per mundum hunc uiuersum uirtute non mole diffusum*). Hym they call the father of all.

¹⁵ Cp. these definitions of "nature" as related to the divine essence (A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-449): No. 13,—“The cosmic law or general scheme of things, conceived as the ground of all particular details in that scheme”; No. 15,—“By a hypostatization, often passing into a vague personification—of the idea of causality contained in 13: the general cause of phenomena, the universal originating or moving power. . . . As personified, especially ‘Mother Nature.’ The term in this sense tends to become a substitute for ‘God as efficient cause.’”

¹⁶ *Utopia*, ed. Lupton, pp. 266-268; cf. pp. 190, 293-294.

To hym allone they attrIBUTE the begynnynge, the encreasynges, the procedynge, the chaunges, and the endes of all thynges. Nother they gyue deuine honours to any other then to him.¹⁷

Concerning this deity, or "nature," there are in the Utopian religious philosophy two absolute principles, on which only all freemen *must* strictly agree in order to hold citizenship. These are, first, "that the sowle (of man) ys immortall, and by the bountifull goodnes of God ordeyned to felicitie";¹⁸ and, second, that from this divine Providence men must expect "that to our vertues and good deades rewardes be apoynted after this lyfe, and to our euell deades punyshementes."¹⁹ Significantly, a freeman who denies or doubts these absolutes (i. e. professes atheism or agnosticism) is promptly classed with brute beasts and madmen, and is at once deprived of all honor, office, and the citizen's privilege of free expression of his thoughts. Since by Utopian definition animals lack "reason," their reasoning here is clearly that a man who makes a declaration can only do so by going contrary to the distinctive best ethical and religious "nature" of (uncorrupted) men. This therefore is *prima facie* evidence of a corrupt "nature": being no longer ruled by "right reason," such individuals meet the Utopian concept of insanity; and clearly in consequence society must isolate from its normal members the one who is no longer aware of social obligations which depend upon uncorrupted "nature" and "reason." This will be seen to be the consistent Utopian attitude toward those who do not obey the "law" of nature:

¹⁷ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 266-267. Again More is attempting to define aspects of the divine "nature" (cf. A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-456): in this concept of a religion of "nature," the Utopians tend to regard "nature" as No. 16,—"The universe in its entirety: 'everything'"; No. 31,—[note the Utopian tendency to pantheism in the last two quotations] "In the Stoic pantheism, 'Nature' is equivalent to 'God,' conceived as identical with the material universe or its constitutive substance . . . but at the same time as purposive, rational and perfect (Stoic optimism)"; part of No. 66,—". . . the 'religion of nature' tends to mean 'that derived from the study of external nature,' usually with the assumption of the cogency of the argument from the design"; in this "natural" religion God is found in "'nature,' i. e. in the universe as a whole." See also note 15 above. It is not intended to suggest, without qualification, that the Utopian religion tends to be Stoical in principle. See also the qualifications of No. 31 in note 24 below.

¹⁸ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. 188.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Hym that is of a contrary opinion [i.e. does not believe in immortality of the soul and in just rewards after death] they counte not in the numbere of men, as one that hath aualed [i.e. debased] the hyghe nature²⁰ of his sowle to the vienes of brute beastes bodies (*ut qui sublimem animae suae naturam ad pecuini corpusculi uilitatem deiecerit*); muche lesse in the numbere of their citiziens whoes lawes and ordenaunces, if it were not for feare, he wold nothing at al esteeme. . . . And thus he is of all sorte despysed as of an vnprofitable and of a base and vile nature.²¹ Howe be it they put hym to no punyshement, because they be perswaded that it is in no mans powre to beleue what he lyst.²²

The Utopians generally agree, furthermore, that the virtuous character of the divine ruling "nature" is expressed to man in several mighty gifts, whose potentialities are the foundation of religious and social life. The first "natural" gift, which is regarded as a god-like power distinguishing man as superior in created "nature"

²⁰ Throughout this quotation More limited his effort to the definition of some aspects of the "nature" of uncorrupted man and, by contrast, with the "nature" of beasts, who are (normally) "vile,"—i.e. from the Utopian religious and ethical viewpoint. Several senses of "nature" seem to be used; cf. (A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 447-453): No. 2,—“The congenital or inborn qualities, characters or talents of a person, in contrast with the effects of instruction or training: ‘nature’ *vs.* ‘culture.’” But cp. notes 26, 47 below: good Utopians do not admire congenital “nature” *per se* unless it is uncorrupted. No. 19,—“. . . An individual’s nature is that part of his character or tendencies which is ‘not in his own power,’ which is outside the sphere of his will and for which he is not responsible.” Here we plainly have that it is not in man’s power to believe “what he list”; but elsewhere More is ambiguous on this point: cf. part ii, below. The Utopians approve men who retain and follow (uncorrupted) “high nature”; cf. No. 49,—“Since each species of living being has its distinctive ‘nature,’ and since its good . . . consists in the ‘realization’ of this nature, that is ‘by nature’ the good for man which most fully realizes the distinctive attribute of human nature, this attribute being variously defined”; and No. 51,—“Good ‘by nature’ for the individual is that internal order or organization of the soul in which the part (‘reason’ or ‘conscience’) whose nature it is to rule controls the other parts.” For the Utopians this right-ruling part is “reason”; cf. notes 24, 26, 47 below.

²¹ This use especially draws on No. 51, given in note 20; the atheist is “base and vile” because he is no longer ruled by the “good,” distinctive human faculty of “reason,” whose proper function in uncorrupted men is to rule.

²² *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 274-275; attempts were made to restore these infrequent dissenters to “right reason,” if possible (*ibid.*, pp. 275-276, 270, 321).

to all other living creatures, is the faculty of "reason," together with a capacity for and an inclination toward a life ruled by "reason." The atheist was classed with brute beasts, who by definition lack both (uncorrupted) man's "reason" and distinctive "nature." This faculty is apparent in many ways, for instance in the unique ability of man to appreciate the virtuous purposes of the divine "nature" as expressed in the design and modes of working of the material universe. Thus More wrote that God, "or the very same [i. e. divine] nature," "hathe made (man alone) of wytte and capacitye to consydre and vnderstand the excellencye of so greate a woorke."²³ Since through this faculty of "reason" the divine "nature" and the means to the virtuous, rational life which (it is assumed) "god" intended for man can best be understood, all citizens agree that the criterion of what is good and to be agreed upon, in everyday life as in religion, is "reason," and that man was divinely intended to live "according to nature," being ruled then by "reason" (in the sense of uncorrupted "right reason"):

For they define vertue to be a life ordered according to nature²⁴ (*nempe uirtutem definiunt, secundum naturam uiuere*); and that we be hereunto

²³ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. 218. On the aesthetic senses of "nature" used here, see note 30 below.

²⁴ As J. H. Lupton notes (*ibid.*, p. 190 n.), this is the Stoical definition of virtue. Here (cf. note 11 above) "nature" refers at once to divine and to human attributes.

(i) As applying to the divine "nature," several senses at least appear. See Nos. 13 and 15 (note 15 above); and No. 31 (note 17 above) but with the following qualification. While the passage cited above note 16 may be taken as placing "god" equivalent to "the very same nature," More seems on the whole rather to suggest that the divine creative "nature" is superior to its creations but revealed in the design and mode of operation of the material universe. The cogency of the argument from the design is assumed (No. 66, note 17 above); and the Utopians tend strongly to regard the divine "nature" as "purposive, rational, and perfect," as in No. 31. This carries over into Nos. 49, 50, and 55 (see below) as applied to men of uncorrupted "nature," with the idea that such men should live "according to nature" as far as the divine intentions can be discovered by man.

(ii) As applying to "human nature" there seem to be again several senses, including Nos. 2, 19, 49 and 51 (note 20 above), but also two important new meanings. Consider (A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-455): No. 50,—“In the formula used primarily to express sense 49, *secundum naturam vivere*, that formula, especially in Stoicism, usually

ordeined of god; and that he doth followe the course of nature,²⁵ which in desiering and refusyng thynges is ruled by reason²⁶ (*eum uero naturae ductum sequi, quisquis in appetendis fugiendisq; rebus obtemperat rationi*). Furthermore, that reason doth chiefelie and pryncipallye kendle in men the loue and veneration of the deuyne maiestie.²⁷

The most important result of this basic Utopian philosophic principle is that in every possible virtuous way the citizens delight in

also implies harmony with and acquiescence in the general course and purpose of 'Nature' in sense 31: ethical naturalism as cosmical piety, the religion of 'accepting the universe.' No. 55,—“Obligatory by the ‘law of nature’ are those actions which conform to the ‘natures of things,’ i. e. to eternal and self-evident truths, arising either out of the ‘nature of the good’ or out of the ‘nature of the relations in which moral agents stand to one another’: ‘Nature’ as ‘right reason’ and ethical naturalism as rationalistic intuitionism in morals.” For Utopian reservations put upon “right reason” see the discussion of “true” and “counterfeit” pleasure in Utopian Epicureanism, notes 43-56 below.

²⁵ This use of “nature” corresponds closely with that cited in note 24.

²⁶ As a divine attribute “reason” here has about the same senses as (divine) “nature” in notes 24 and 25. As referring to a human attribute, the meanings cited in part (ii) of note 24 mainly carry over, especially sense No. 55. Plainly More here refers, as the contexts show, to “reason” as equal to uncorrupted man’s “natural” or “right reason.” *Utopia* was to show life lived according to (uncorrupted) reason, without divine revelation. But several new senses begin to appear, to be further developed later. Cf. (A. Q. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-452): No. 40,—“... that which is objectively valid in the realm of morals . . . identified with that which is good or right by ‘nature’; and . . . the latter . . . construed as equivalent to ‘that which is according to nature’”; and No. 41,—“In its ethical application, the notion of the ‘objectively’ good was, in Greek use, antithetic, not chiefly to individual opinion, but to social custom or positive law. Hence, that which is ‘according to nature’ is conceived as opposed to those rules, practices or institutions which are (merely) customary, conventional, traditional. Hence the antithesis of ‘nature’ and ‘custom’ . . . , sometimes passing into a denial of the validity of laws as such. . . . A revival of this antithesis of ‘nature’ and ‘custom’ was a conspicuous feature of the ethics of the late Renaissance.” A qualification is needed: as will appear, there is no opposition among Utopian citizens to laws as such, no approval of “ethical naturalism as moral antinomianism.” (The Utopian religious philosophy contrasts sharply with such antinomian teachings as those of Johannes Agricola about 1535). Rather More, for the purpose of his satire, shows the Utopians, as uncorrupted, making their “law of nature” and practices “according to nature” antithetic to the *corrupt* laws and practices common or customary in Europe. See notes 46, 47, and 54 below and the whole second part of this essay.

²⁷ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. 190.

using their reasoning capacities, for instance as in studying the secrets of the physical universe, obviously hoping thereby to discover more about the attributes and modes of working of the divine "nature" as apparent in the universal design. The passage illustrates strikingly the keen delight of the alert renaissance humanist in an expanding intellectual horizon:

Phisicke is no where in greater honour; bycause they count the knowledge of yt emonge the goodlieste, and mooste profytable partes of Philosophie.²⁸ For whyles they by the helpe of thys Philosophie searche owte the secrete mysteres of nature²⁹ (*naturae secreta scrutantur*), they thynke that they not onlye receaue therby wonderfull greate pleasur, but also obteyn great thankes and fauour of the auctoure and maker therof. Whome [i. e. god or the divine "nature"] they thynke, accordynge to the fassyon of other artyfycers, to haue sett furthe the maruelous and gorgious frame of the worlde for man to beholde; whome onelye [i. e. man] he hathe made of wytte and capacytye to consydre and vnderstand the excellencye of so greate a woorke.³⁰

²⁸ Although the Utopians discriminate between man's use of his "reason" in religion and in "Philosophy," there is no essential opposition between the two, as might seem verbally implied. For the basic assumptions of the philosophy of Epicureanism (see below, pp. 60-64), as of Utopian ethical, political, and aesthetic values in general, are taken from religion, with whose aid reason, as in natural science or philosophy, is thought "weak and vnperfecte."

This use of "reason" (cf. note 26), the distinctive human trait, in "natural" Philosophy (apart from religion) suggests another sense of "nature" which is later in *Utopia* developed further. Cf. (A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 451): No. 39,—“In the terms ‘light of nature’ [which I believe More does not use] and ‘natural reason’ the word is used with the special reference to the mode of acquisition of knowledge: the ‘light of nature’ consists in the ordinary means of acquiring knowledge possessed by every rational being [i. e. in *Utopia* every human of uncorrupted “nature”], independently of (a) tradition and instruction; and (b) of revelation or supernatural inspiration. The terms tend also to carry the connotation of ‘the faculty by which man is acquainted with self-evident and eternal truths.’” The Utopians are specifically said to lack the aid of divine revelation (*Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, p. 211). Some qualifications are needed: see pp. 64-65 below on “right reason” as embodied in a semi-traditional *consensus gentium*; and cf. restrictions upon “true” pleasure.

²⁹ This of course refers to various aspects of the divine “nature”; see notes 15, 17, and part (i) of note 24 above. Natural science has a religious tone. Cf. No. 14 cited in note 32 below.

³⁰ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 217-218. Although More began with

Thus, although the Utopian religious philosophy was merely the truest possible "onles anny godlyer be inspyred into man from

medicine (*re medica*) in mind, in what follows he was obviously thinking of physical, or natural, science in general.

Here clearly (as in the passage cited above, note 17), the universe is viewed with admiration as a work of art, whose characteristics indicate attributes and modes of working of the artist; all of created "nature" is his work. In this sense "nature" draws something from definitions Nos. 31 and 66 (note 17 above). The separate aesthetic senses of "nature" here and elsewhere in *Utopia* require some discrimination, although an essay may be needed for the purpose. In the following brief suggestions use has been made of A. O. Lovejoy's "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," *Modern Language Notes*, XLII (1927), 446-448. As a general definition Professor Lovejoy suggests: "'Nature' in general, i.e. the cosmical order as a whole, or a half-personified power . . . manifested therein, as exemplar, of which the attributes or modes of working should characterize also human art." Not all these attributes listed by Lovejoy appear in *Utopia*, but it may be worth while at least to list a few which do figure in Utopian thought: (i) "Uniformity" ("Intuitively known principles or standards of 'taste' [analogous to the 'law of nature' in morals], whereby that which is objectively and essentially [i.e. 'by nature'] beautiful is recognized"), together with "The universal and immutable in thought, feeling and taste; what has always been known, what everyone can immediately understand and enjoy," "universal aesthetic validity";—(ii) "Simplicity";—(iii) "Economy of means in achieving a given end";—(iv) "Regularity: nature as 'geometrizing'."

From the Utopian viewpoint it might be said that Utopia itself was almost a work of art. The aesthetic desiderata which the Utopians most require and admire in words of art (if they are to "accord with nature" in one or another of the above sense) are those which, according to Professor Lovejoy, characterize the "strictly neo-classic meanings of the rule of 'imitating' or 'following' nature": (v),—"Universal aesthetic validity, capacity for being immediately understood and enjoyed by all men (whose 'natural' taste has not been corrupted)," often with the implication of (vi) "Adherence to standards of 'objective' beauty, these commonly identified with one or both of" (vii) "Symmetry, balance, definiteness and regularity of form," and (viii) "Simplicity, i.e. sparseness of ornament and avoidance of intricacy in design."

Although many elements of these meanings of "nature" will appear throughout *Utopia* (i.e. book II), these definitions are not to be considered uniformly indicative of Utopian attitudes without more qualification than space now permits. In brief illustration at least in part of (i), (ii), and (iii) might be instanced: the general Utopian, Spartan-like admiration of and restriction of work to the production of "the necessary" and "profitable"; the Utopian attitude toward the universe as a work of art; the striking measure of uniformity and agreement as to what constitutes "true

heaven,"³¹ natural science was itself a way of worship by which the Utopians hoped gradually to increase their understanding of the divine universal virtue, or "nature." Hence, concerning Utopian religion, More wrote that "They thinke that the contemplation of nature"³² (*naturae contemplationem*), and the prayse thereof cumminge, is to God a very acceptable honour."³³ Characteristically, the philosophic Utopians reckon the highest pleasure known to man to be intellectual: "They imbrace chiefly the pleasures of the mind. For them they cownte the chiefist and most principall of all."³⁴

After reason the Utopians held the divine "nature's" greatest gift to be man's capacity for and strong inclination toward a close-knit, harmonious family and communal social life, a life distinguished (i. e. as compared with that of brute beasts) by (uncorrupted) man's mutual benevolent solicitude for the common welfare. "Reason" itself, man's most divine faculty, urges men to live joyfully and to help all others, "in respect of the society of nature (*pro naturae societate*)" to live happily.³⁵ To comfort and aid

pleasure" (*Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 188-211 *passim*); the admiration for laws "few and simple" (*ibid.*, p. 234), etc. Rather striking illustrations of (iv) appear in the Utopian passion for geometrical planning of city and countryside (*ibid.*, pp. 130-132), of the patriarchal family and of the plan of political representation (*ibid.*, p. xlv), and in the regularity of size for each family and social unit throughout Utopia. In illustration of (i), (ii), (iii), (v), and (vii) might be cited the Utopian pleasure in extreme simplicity and almost standardized uniformity in dress (*ibid.*, pp. 150, 140), simplicity in food and table-manners (*ibid.*, pp. 164-165); and the philosophic opposition to cosmetics for women (*ibid.*, p. 232).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³² This seems to refer only to various aspects of the divine "nature": cf. Nos. 13 and 15 (note 15), 31 and 66 (note 17), aesthetic senses (i-iv) in note 30. In addition a new sense, from which No. 66 often derives, may be considered (A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 448): No. 14,—"The physical world as a whole; the 'sum of things as constituted by the elements and the cosmic laws and processes.'"

³³ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 279-280.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207. Cf. however the important restrictions put upon "true" pleasure. Although there is a small group of non-intellectuals who labor only at needed good works, they are esteemed somewhat as "servants" or slaves (*ibid.*, pp. 280-281).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. On the meaning of "nature" here, as a society in which uncorrupted men would "realize" their distinctive gifts, see below, note 47; cf. also the meanings of man's uncorrupted "nature," note 20 above.

his fellows, within his species, is distinctively (i. e. "by nature") human,—". . . a vertue moste peculiarlye belongynge to man (*qua uirtute nulla est homini magis propria*)."³⁶ This mutually harmonious life finds expression in the Utopian idea that, both according to the intentions of the divine and the necessities of human "nature," all (i. e. uncorrupted) men should feel themselves closely interdependent within a "society" or "league of nature," which makes written treaties superfluous between the Utopians and other peoples, ". . . as though nature"³⁷ had not set sufficient love between man and man (*quasi non hominem homini satis natura conciliet*)."³⁸

Furthermore, the divine "nature" is a benevolent giver of life and the material necessities of life, not only to man as a superior species, but perhaps even to lower animals as well: "nature" is ". . . a moste tender and lounge mother (*parens indulgentissima*)."³⁹ Since they assume that ". . . the mercifull clemency of god hath (no) delite in blood and slaughter,"⁴⁰ (then clearly reasoning that it would be inconsistent for the benevolent creator of life to enjoy its destruction), the Utopians never make religious sacrifices of living creatures; while by an extension of the same reasoning, as we shall see, they abhor all bloodshed as contrary to "nature" and as gradually destructive of the "clemency" which is the "gentlest affection of our nature."⁴¹ As for the material

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191. Along with reason this faculty for social life now appears as one of man's distinctive gifts (sense No. 49, note 20) whose "realization" is considered "good" by the Utopians.

³⁷ Here again appear senses both of divine and human "nature." As divine, cf. Nos. 13 and 15 (note 15) and No. 31 (note 17). As referring to human "nature" cf. Nos. 2, 19, 49, 51 (note 20). Mutual aid to fellow-men becomes an obligation (sense No. 55, note 24) and tends to become objectively valid (No. 40, 41, note 26).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-242.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174. On this sense of "nature" see especially No. 15 (note 15 above); and No. 31 (note 17 above), observing that tenderness and love are assumed to be part of the divine "nature's" purposes.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158. Clearly this refers to human "nature": see especially in note 20 above, Nos. 19, and particularly 49, the "good" for man now appearing to be in part to "realize" the distinctive "clemency" of his "nature" (sense No. 2, 19). Elsewhere "reason" (No. 51, note 20) is assumed to be the proper guide of man in the realization of clemency and other distinctive attributes. See especially the discussions of butchery, hunting and war, pt. ii of this essay.

needs of man, (divine) "nature" has given clear suggestions of the deity's purposes toward man both in the relative amounts and locations of natural resources. That is, "nature [i. e. divine] . . . hath placed the beste and moste necessarye thynges (e. g. air, earth, water) open a brode";⁴² while providing only small, hidden amounts of such "unnecessary" materials as gold.

Finally, the distinctive Utopian social practices are determined, not only by these two gifts to man from the divine "nature," but also by the peculiar Utopian Epicureanism. While the justification for describing the free, philosopher-citizens as Epicureans is that pleasure is their *summum bonum*,⁴³ certain significant restrictions in practice are rigidly put upon their concept. For the citizens (as philosophers guided strictly by uncorrupted "reason," with the common welfare always in mind) agree in absolutely dividing "true" (i. e. socially beneficial) from "counterfeit" (i. e. socially injurious) pleasures. The basis of this vital distinction lies in the Utopian religious philosophy. Since it is assumed that divine "nature" planted in (uncorrupted) man a powerful inclination to live in harmonious cooperation with his fellow-men, ruled by "reason," the Utopians infer that only those pleasures which are (i. e. "by nature") "true," "good and honest" and which consequently enhance the good life should be desired by or permitted to the citizens:

They reason of vertue and pleasure. But the chiefe . . . question is in what . . . the felycytye of man consisteth. But in thys . . . theye seme almooste to muche [i. e. from Hythlodaye's Catholic viewpoint] geuen . . . to . . . defende pleasure; wherin they determine other all or the chiefyste parte of mans felycytye to reste. And . . . the defence of thys . . . opynyon they fetcche euen from theyre graue . . . and rygorous relygyon.⁴⁴ For they neuer dyspute of felycytye . . . , but they ioyn to the reasons of Philosophie certeyne pryncyple taken owte of relygyon; wythoute the whyche . . . theye

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 174. On "nature" as divine here cf. Nos. 15 (note 15), 31 (note 17), and the aesthetic senses (ii) and (iii) in note 30.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 188; cf. the whole discussion of pleasure on pp. 188-211.

⁴⁴ J. H. Lupton was surprised that More termed the Utopian religion "grave and rigorous." When however the Utopian distinction between religion and philosophy is made (see note 28 above), it may appear that More correctly termed "rigorous" the relentless logic of the Utopian religion (whose initial assumptions all citizens *must* grant [cf. notes 18, 19, and the treatment of atheism, note 22]) and of the reasoning based on the same premises. Utopian Epicureanism is merry by contrast, being based upon but distinct from religion.

thynke reason of yt selfe weak and vnperfecte.⁴⁵ . . . But . . . they thynke not felicitie to reste in all pleasure, but onely in that pleasure that is good and honest ⁴⁶ (*bona atque honesta*); and that hereto, as to perfet blessednes, our nature ⁴⁷ is allured and drawen euen of vertue ⁴⁸ (*naturam nostram ab ipsa uirtute pertrahi*). . . . For they define vertue to be life ordered according to nature; . . . and that he doth followe the course of nature, which in desiering and refusyng thynges is ruled by reason.⁴⁹

"Reason" itself, as man's most divine gift, prompts man first of course to venerate god, but then above all to lead a joyous Epicurean life, not in selfish privacy, but actively aiding other men to equal felicity, since they are (by inference) equal in the "society of nature." In fact, to help others to live merrily is an almost religious obligation of each citizen:

Furthermore, reason doth chiefelie . . . kendle in men the loue and veneration of the deuyne maiestie; . . . And . . . secondarely, it moueth and prouoketh vs to leade our lyfe out of care (*quam . . . minime anxiam*) in ioye and myrthe, and to helpe all other [i. e. all other men], in respecte of the sosiete of nature ⁵⁰ (*pro naturae societate*) to obteyne the same.⁵¹

⁴⁵ This seems clearly "natural reason" as in No. 39 (note 28).

⁴⁶ Here appears the important sense (later even further developed) of that which is good "objectively," or "by nature," as opposed in the examples in the context by what is considered good by custom, convention or tradition,—Nos. 40 and 41 as qualified in note 26 above, with reference to European practices.

⁴⁷ As referring mainly or wholly to human "nature," see all the main senses suggested in note 20 above. No. 49 becomes of major importance: the "good" for (uncorrupted) man in Utopia emerges as the fullest possible "realization" of the distinctive attributes of human "nature," these attributes being defined collectively as a capacity, perhaps inborn (Nos. 2, 19) for a life of pleasurable, cooperative social union, ruled by "reason" (No. 51), and motivated by loving care for the common welfare of men, equal (if uncorrupted) within a "society of nature."

⁴⁸ As suggesting a human attribute, cf. Nos. 2, 19 (note 20); as suggesting a divine attribute (perfect virtue being assumed to be a divine quality), see No. 31,—divine "nature" as purposive, rational and perfect (note 17).

⁴⁹ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 187-190; the latter part of the same passage was analyzed above notes 24 to 27.

⁵⁰ On this sense of a "society of nature" as the "good" achieved when men collectively "realize" their distinctive attributes, see note 47, No. 49. This refers clearly to human "nature," but there is an implied contrast with the "vile nature" and characteristic life of animals, a contrast which is later in *Utopia* specifically developed. Cf. the reasoning which classed the atheist with brute beasts (note 20 above), but especially the analysis of the whole attack on butchery, hunting and war, which forms the latter part of this present essay.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

But what constitutes "true" pleasure? How do the Utopians discriminate the "counterfeit"? How is this eccentric Epicureanism, which incorporates the Stoical definition of virtue,⁵² related to the whole Utopian philosophy? First, all (uncorrupted) Utopians agree that the "nature" of true pleasure is objectively fixed and beyond man's power to alter; it is essentially (i.e. "by nature") pleasant to (uncorrupted) men. It is something "universal and immutable in thought, feeling and taste"; it possesses "universal aesthetic validity"; and in Utopian practice there are strong suggestions also that, for those of uncorrupted "nature," true pleasure has always been immediately known, understood and enjoyed as such.⁵³ Man himself however can deteriorate in "nature" until he is no longer guided by "right reason"; in fact the Utopians observed that men who indulged in "counterfeit" pleasures, contrary to right reason, might in time become so corrupt and so dominated by perverse custom as to be no longer able to distinguish "true, natural pleasure" from its counterfeit. In any event wilful choice of "counterfeit" pleasure is to the Utopian *prima facie* evidence of a man's corrupt "nature." Nor does the fact that the senses (or passions) may be stirred by the "counterfeit" (when, for instance, animals are slain in hunting) make it a "true" pleasure; this fact rather confirms the Utopian belief in the corruption of the individual who enjoys such things:

though the common sorte of people [i.e. in Europe] doth take them [hunting, dicing, hoarding gold, etc.] for pleasures, yet they, seying there is no naturall pleasauntnes in them (*illi tamen quum natura nihil insit suaue*), do playnelye determine them to haue no affinitie with trewe and right pleasure. . . . (That the senses are stirred by the "counterfeit" makes no difference). For not the nature⁵⁴ of the thynges (*non enim ipsius rei natura*), but there peruerse and lewde custome is the cause hereof; Howbeit no mans iudgement, depraued and corrupte, other by sicknese or by custome, can chaunge the nature of pleasure, more then it can doo the natur [sic] of other thinges.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 190, note; the definition appears with note 24 above.

⁵³ See the aesthetic meanings of "nature," (i), cited in note 30 above.

⁵⁴ This crucial passage offers one of the most clear-cut illustrations of "nature" in the meanings of Nos. 40 and 41, note 26 above. As will appear, in many cases Utopian "true" pleasure involves various aesthetic senses of "nature," as suggested in note 30 above.

⁵⁵ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton, pp. 201-202. The whole discussion of pleasure is most important (*ibid.*, pp. 187-211), in illustration of the principles summarized above.

Thus the Utopian version of Epicureanism furnishes a concept of psychological motivation according to which every citizen, in his pursuit of pleasure, must subject every form of sensual stimulation to the critical judgment of (uncorrupted) "right reason." The criteria then applied in accepting or rejecting pleasures, as either "true" or "counterfeit," are derived from the Utopian conception of the purposes of the divine "nature," or god, as intending men to create for themselves a good life in which "reason" would be the guide to social cooperation in the interests, not of the individual alone, but most of all of the common welfare. In practice pleasures were in general judged to be "counterfeit" and were forbidden to citizens when, first, they appeared to be contrary to the Utopian concept of "right reason" or man's best "nature" (variously considered as religious, political, ethical, aesthetic, etc.), or, second, when the observed after-effects of a given enjoyment were found to be actually injurious to some one of man's distinctive qualities, upon whose preservation in a healthy state the "society of nature" was believed to depend. The Utopian criteria of "true" pleasure are, on the whole, represented as the wisdom accumulated by painful, extended inductive observation (over 1760 years) on what is vital to as well as most damaging to the good life among uncorrupted men; while these historical conclusions, with the surprising uniformity of opinion as to what comprises "true" or "counterfeit" pleasure, are manifest as "right reason" expressed by the *consensus gentium*. In Utopia coercion of men into agreement with authority was found both undesirable and unnecessary, for when men of "right reason" exercised it in strictly dispassionate discussion, a strong tendency to uniformity of opinion was developed.⁵⁶ Again, the outside world provided an inexhaustible supply of examples of the folly and suffering resulting from "counterfeit" pleasures,⁵⁷ examples which served as object-lessons in teaching each new Utopian generation to follow only those pleasures which, according to "reason," are *bona atque honesta*. Since much of the keenest "true" pleasure is found in aiding others to live well, it is not surprising that other practical expressions of the *consensus gentium* are found in the Utopian approval of "justice"

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 267-268, 270-274 *passim*, and the instances cited in note 30.

⁵⁷ See, e. g., the Utopian attack on "counterfeit" pleasure, customary in the outside world, centered in hunting (*ibid.*, pp. 158, 199-202), deferential pageantry, bowing in honour, possession of gold, etc. (*ibid.*, pp. 232, 177-180).

as "the strongeste and ^suereste bonde of a common wealthe,"⁵⁸ and in the cosmopolitan, international extension of this idea into belief in at least the potentiality that all men (if uncorrupted, of course) might be joined in the "strong league" of the "felowshyppe of nature," knit together by mutual "loue and beneuolence."⁵⁹ Finally, the general agreement as to what is "true" pleasure is expressed in a genial assumption that any pleasure which is not known to have injurious social effects may be presumed to be good and honest, excepting evidence of anti-social "nature" which might appear in time. For "no kynde of pleasure (is) forbidden, whereof cummeth no harm."⁶⁰

To be sure the Utopians draw certain conclusions as a result of comparing Utopia with the world outside. For, as we have seen, the Utopians assume that not only they, but all men as a species (if uncorrupted), enjoy the same potentialities for a good life based on the "realization" of the divine "nature's" gifts of capacity for "reason" and loving social cooperation. In contrast with the ostensibly civilized nations outside the happy commonwealth, the Utopians had only made the best of their opportunities. In fact, when the island was first conquered by the original wise prince Utopus (some 1760 years before Hythlodaye's visit), the people were, like renaissance Europeans, "rude, wild" and given to religious strife.⁶¹ To the Utopians therefore, the remarkable advantages of their life, as compared with that suggested in the first book of *Utopia*, were the hard-won rewards of centuries of effort to live "according to nature" or "reason." As for the widespread poverty, disease, greed, mutual hatred of rich and poor, malgovernment, crime and war which seemed characteristic throughout England and Europe in general, such evils indicated (to the Utopians, to Hythlodaye and to More himself) at the very least a disastrous failure of man to benefit greatly from his distinctive potentialities, if indeed existing conditions were not (as was possible) the consequence of wholesale corruption of man's good "nature." In the Utopian view "Nature" endowed men nobly, and then left it largely to man's discretion, whether by corrupting his "high nature" he would become "beastly" or worse, or whether

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 242; see also notes 35 to 38 above, 47 and 51.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 118, 271, xliii-xlvi.

(even without the aid of divine revelation) he would gradually "realize" his gifts in an orderly, peaceful, mutually benevolent "society of nature," "according to reason." The satiric contrast between Utopia and Europe is most stunning and the central purpose most clear when it is seen (as the sequel to this essay is to show in some detail) that the good life in Utopia is represented as achieved by man's wisdom and energy alone, whereas the wretched conditions in Europe were the sorry accomplishment of Christians, who possessed not only the same "natural" gifts as the Utopians but above all the aid of divine revelation. Thus the *Utopia* concludes, while not in despair, yet on a note of judicious pessimism, colored by hopes which had been brightest in 1509, when Henry VIII became king, but which were ebbing while *Utopia* was being written.⁶² For even the most corrupt men would never be able to terminate universal "nature's" gifts to man, although their "realization" might be long delayed. If a wise prince (like old Utopus) were disposed to make the right beginning (although improvement at first might be slow), eventually England, with her matchless resources of men and land, might achieve a rich, stable and peaceful common life even surpassing that of Utopia itself, with the Christian religion added to that of "reason." But "I (must) nedes confesse and graunt," wrote More, as the last words of *Utopia*, "that many thinges be in the vtopian weal publique, which in our cities I may rather wisshe for then hoope after."⁶³

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⁶² On the great good expected of Henry VIII in 1509 by More and his humanist friends in particular, and on their progressive disillusionment and frustration, see R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (New York, [1935]), pp. 99-156. Professor Douglas Bush, in an address before the Modern Language Association (1937) and in "Tudor Humanism and Henry VIII," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, VII (1938), 162-177, attacks part of Chambers' thesis that Henry VIII "arrested" humanism as a whole in England, but without disputing the frustration of More himself.

⁶³ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton., p. 309. On the ease with which the Utopians accepted Christianity, see *ibid.*, p. 268.

